

VETERANS DAY

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10/24/08

491 Words

Days of remembrance are established within a nation's borders in order to encourage its citizens to reflect upon a significant person, place or event. These special days are designed to be passed down from one generation to the next. Veterans Day was established with these same objectives in mind. Originally recognized as Armistice Day, commemorating the November 11, 1918 ceasefire which eventually ended World War I, it was later changed in 1954 to Veterans Day to acknowledge all U. S. women and men who have served in the Armed Forces, and especially those who have offered the ultimate sacrifice (their lives) in defense of our country.

My grandfather was a soldier and a veteran of World War II. He has long since passed away. He wasn't killed during the war itself, but lost his life ultimately to another war; the battle against alcohol. It is estimated that 40,000,000 – 50,000,000 lives were lost during World War II, so it doesn't astonish me that he acquired a severe drinking problem. I dread to imagine what type of experiences he was forced to persevere through, and then, later memories he was left to cope with. How do you find the will to live while so much death is encompassing you? What gives our soldiers the courage to fight? What caused my grandfather to continue to stand in the midst of what had to appear as an overwhelmingly helpless situation?

I believe the answer is rooted in the overall beliefs of our country. I believe that our country is built upon certain principles, which transcend our imperfections and inadequacies. We are committed to freedom! We are committed to helping others! We are committed to making a positive difference in our world! These commitments are ingrained deeply within our nation's citizens, and these are the same commitments, which our soldiers take onto the battlefield. This is ultimately the reason we achieve so much as a country and have progressed so quickly because we visualize a greater horizon for all people, at home and abroad.

My grandfather was known as an alcoholic and the neighborhood drunk, but I never viewed him as anyone but an American hero. Our military personnel represent the very best of the U. S. because those individuals pay the true price to ensure that we not only have "peace that lasts, but also, peace that heals."

I am confident that my grandfather, as with all of our faithful women and men in the armed forces, expects more from my life as well. They fought and continue to fight so that I might have a future worth much value. It would be an insult to them and to this amazing country for me to continue creating cycles of victimization in a country where they work in order to break those cycles down. They deserve better, and because of their sacrifices and commitments I realize I deserve better as well.